



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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**DATE:** June 23, 2017

**TO:** Exceptional Children Directors  
Exceptional Children Preschool Coordinators

**FROM:** William B. Hussey, Director, Exceptional Children Division *WBH*  
John R. Pruette, Director, Office of Early Learning *JRP*  
Vivian K. James, Program Administrator & 619 Coordinator, Office of Early Learning *VKJ*

**RE: Update on the Early Learning Sensory Support Program for 2017-18- Requesting Services**

The North Carolina Early Learning Sensory Support Program (ELSSP) is administered by the Office of Early Learning and collaborates with the Exceptional Children Division. The purpose of this memo is to update all LEAs on some revisions to a request for services process, to inform you of the outcomes of our stakeholder meeting, and how we will use the recent polling results around professional development needs.

Most children served by the ELSSP statewide are birth through two years of age. Over the past three years, we have successfully implemented a Medicaid billing system to defray program costs since it does not receive any state special education nor IDEA funds (Part C nor Part B). Our program for children with hearing impairments has limited capacity to serve children who are ages 3 through 5. However, when capacity is available, we have begun to serve some children in this age band in locations that do not have qualified staff and are in rural areas. One fourth of our caseload (800 per year) consists of preschool children who have visual impairments; however, the program capacity is limited. We therefore request that you use the attached forms when making a request for the ELSSP to provide direct services for children with visual impairments. We will reply to our capacity as soon as possible.

At our recent June 14<sup>th</sup> stakeholder meeting we shared DPI licensure data statewide for teachers with HI and VI certification, and early childhood certification (<http://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/node/3025>). This information is critical to the further development of our program vision and strategic plan. We also identified the top priority for professional development needs for LEA staff and will work with the EC Division Sensory Support Section in the coming months to plan around those needs.

The recommendation gleaned from a policy analysis and efficiency study conducted in 2012-13 around contracting with LEAs for a portion of the cost of direct services will not be initiated during the 2017-18 school year. While still under consideration, additional study, stakeholder input and investigation is warranted.

Contact information for program directors can be located at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/earlylearning/sensory/>

c: Sherry Thomas  
Tracy Riddle  
Bethany Mayo  
Ruth Anne Everett

Attachments

## OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

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